



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –May 26, 2006
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USDA Rural Development To Partner With US Department of Labor In Regional Initiative

Topeka, KS - USDA Rural Development State Director Chuck Banks joined US Department of Labor Assistant Secretary Emily Stover DeRocco and US Department of Commerce Assistant Secretary Sandy Barush for the two-day 'kick off' meeting of the OneKC WIRED Initiative this week in Kansas City, MO. The OneKC WIRED Initiative is a private and public sector venture, originated by the US Department of Labor, to enhance regional economic growth in portions of Kansas and Missouri.

"USDA Rural Development appreciates the Department of Labor's invitation to join in this important regional economic development opportunity. Supporting job growth and creating new businesses is an important goal for Kansas, and USDA will commit its resources to help meet this Initiative goal," remarked State Director Banks.

Assistant Secretary DeRocco, during the meeting's keynote address, commented, "USDA Rural Development has incredible capital financing programs to support economic development. We are excited to have this Agency working with us in this Initiative."

The WIRED Initiative will focus on thirteen regional economic areas across the United States, and is intended to help create high-skill and high-wage job opportunities. The OneKC WIRED Initiative will cover eight counties in Kansas and ten counties in Missouri. The eight Kansas counties participating in the Initiative are Atchison, Douglas, Franklin, Johnson, Leavenworth, Miami, Shawnee, and Wyandotte.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs that support increasing economic opportunity and improving the quality of life of the State's rural residents. The Agency provides equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure in rural America. During Fiscal Year 2005, USDA Rural Development provided nearly \$235 million in direct funding for community and economic development projects across rural Kansas.

For additional information regarding USDA Rural Development programs, interested parties may call the Agency's state headquarters at 785-271-2700 or log onto the state's USDA Rural Development website at: www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks

USDA Rural Development – *Committed to the Future of Rural Communities.*

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